

Expediting Is a Symptom

If everything is urgent, nothing is planned. A repeat expedite is the plan confessing.

Every plant has somebody who is great at saving a bad plan.

The phone rings. A truck gets rerouted. Parts get pulled off one job to save another. Everybody moves fast, the order gets out, and the rescue gets called dedication.

Sometimes it is. Once.

When the same rescue keeps happening, stop celebrating the expedite and look upstream. A forecast missed. An order went in late. A supplier problem sat too long. Lead time got treated like a suggestion. The expedite is not the root cause. It is where the root cause finally got loud enough to hurt.

That is the part people miss. Urgency feels like work. Planning feels boring. So organizations get very good at reacting and never get around to fixing what keeps creating the reaction.

The rescue also sends a bill, and it rarely lands on the person who made the call. Premium freight. Overtime. A setup broken in the middle of a run. The job that got robbed to save this one, which is now behind too. None of that gets labeled “expedite” on a report. It shows up as a plant that always feels behind.

And whatever you celebrate, you get more of. If the rescue is the only thing that earns a thank-you, you are paying people to keep the fires coming.

Track the expedites. Group them by cause. Look for the repeat. If the same shortage, supplier, schedule move, or handoff keeps showing up, there is your work.

Then split the job in two. Handle today's shipment. After that, give the repeat cause an owner and one change that could prevent the next one, and check whether it did.

If everything is urgent, nothing is planned.

An expedite can save today's shipment. It cannot be the operating system. Expediting doesn't fix the schedule. It confesses the schedule was fiction.

Fix the plan. Then run it.

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